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## 60 years later, genocide is alive and well

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**HERALD COLUMNIST**

Imagine if the entire population of Newark was eliminated. An estimated 300,000 people have died in the Darfur region of Sudan, slightly more than the total population of Newark. Nearly 2 million people have been displaced in Darfur. No one notices.

The U.S. Senate passed the Darfur Accountability Act, a bipartisan bill co-sponsored by Sen. Jon Corzine. It imposed strict sanctions against the Sudanese government that has allowed the genocide to continue in Darfur.

Despite Senate support, the amendment was removed in committee from the supplemental funding bill for troop support in Iraq and Afghanistan. The final bill that passed both the Senate and the House does little for the people of Darfur.

In a teleconference on Wednesday, Corzine, fresh from a trip to Chad and Iraq, discussed his frustrations with the Bush administration's inaction on Darfur. Corzine was denied entry into Darfur, but visited refugee camps in Chad. He noted the conditions in the Chad camps were better than he had witnessed on a previous visit to Darfur. Refugees are receiving basic levels of nutrition, but disease is spreading, particularly Hepatitis E. There are few doctors for the thousands of refugees.

The influx of these displaced people is taking a toll on the people of Chad. "They are getting at the end of their rope," Corzine said. Government officials in Chad are concerned about the growing instability of the situation. It could lead to a rebellion in the eastern half of Chad. According to Corzine, there are theories the Sudanese government is orchestrating that unrest. If that happens, not only will Darfur refugees be endangered, but so will the people of Chad. Thousands of people confined in a small area for an indefinite period is a breeding ground for terrorists, according to Corzine. "It is hard to understand how the administration is backing away from this," he said.

The Bush administration may have concerns that a more aggressive approach to stopping the genocide will dissolve a north-south peace resolution in Sudan. The administration also may be treading lightly because it sees the Sudanese government as an ally in fighting the war on terror. The question is: Which war on terror is worse? The war in Iraq or the systematic extermination of hundreds of thousands of people in Darfur?

Corzine said, "The U-turn (in U.S. policy in Darfur) is unacceptable." The United States does not have high-level diplomats devoted solely to Sudan or working with the African Union. A diplomatic resolution soon is improbable.

Ironically, as Congress was stripping the Darfur Accountability Act from the supplemental bill, President Bush was traveling in Europe to mark the 60th anniversary of the surrender of Nazi Germany. The whole world looked back at the horror of the Nazi killing machine while it failed to notice that new seeds of genocide have found fertile ground and grown.

Speaking in Latvia, President Bush said: "Causes can be judged by the monuments they leave behind. The Nazi terror is remembered today in places like Auschwitz, Dachau, Rumbula Forest, where we still hear the cries of the innocent, and pledge to God and history: never again."

Those words ring hollow against the litany of recent genocide: Somalia, Bosnia, Rwanda and now, Darfur. The Nazi terror only was possible because powerful nations failed to take action sooner. That list includes the

United States. The same is true about genocide in Darfur.

Congress, claiming the moral high ground, legislated itself into the private family decision of whether Terri Schiavo should remain on a feeding tube. That same Congress did not see the moral imperative in stopping genocide in Darfur. The congressional high ground is six feet under.

A population the size of Newark has been wiped off the face of the Earth. "Never again." Until the next time.

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